



# THE COMING THREAT: OFFSHORE FISH FARMS IN THE GULF OF MEXICO... HOW DID WE GET HERE?

CHRISTIAN WAGLEY, FLORIDA - ALABAMA COASTAL ORGANIZER, HEALTHY GULF


ANDRIANNA NATSOULAS, CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR, DON'T CAGE OUR OCEANS

JAMES MITCHELL, LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR, DON'T CAGE OUR OCEANS

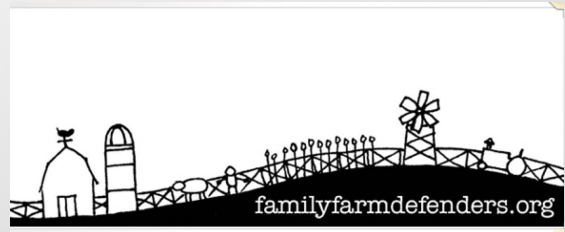
NEAL SCHLEIFER, VICE PRESIDENT, SIESTA KEY CONDO COUNCIL

# DCO2 COALITION

STEERING COMMITTEE



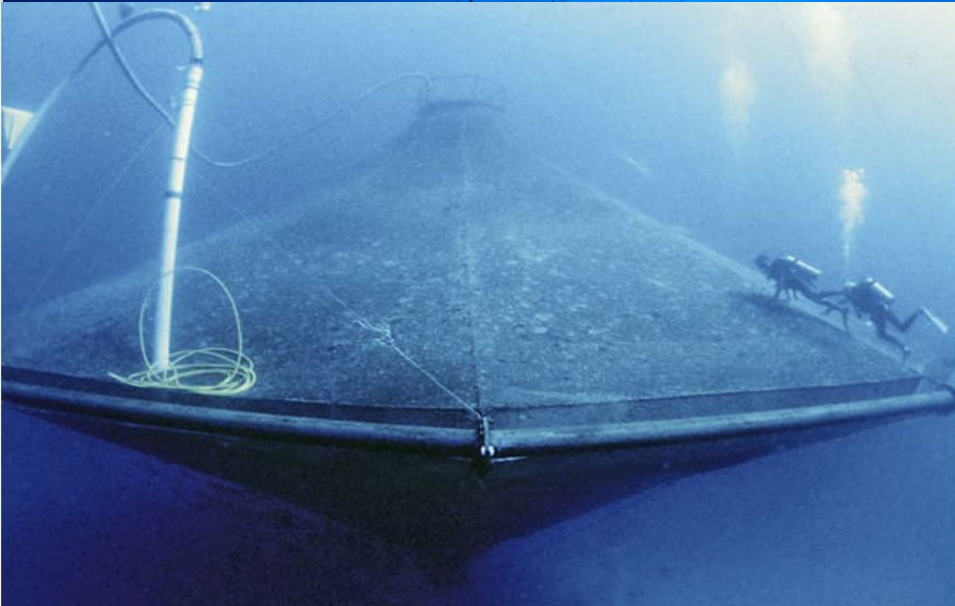
**RECIRCULATING FARMS**



CENTER FOR FOOD SAFETY



# OFFSHORE FINFISH AQUACULTURE




# Offshore Finfish Farming = Confined Animal Feeding Operations



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Harms public health, the environment & local communities

Mass cultivation of finfish in marine waters

Antibiotics, pesticides & other chemicals

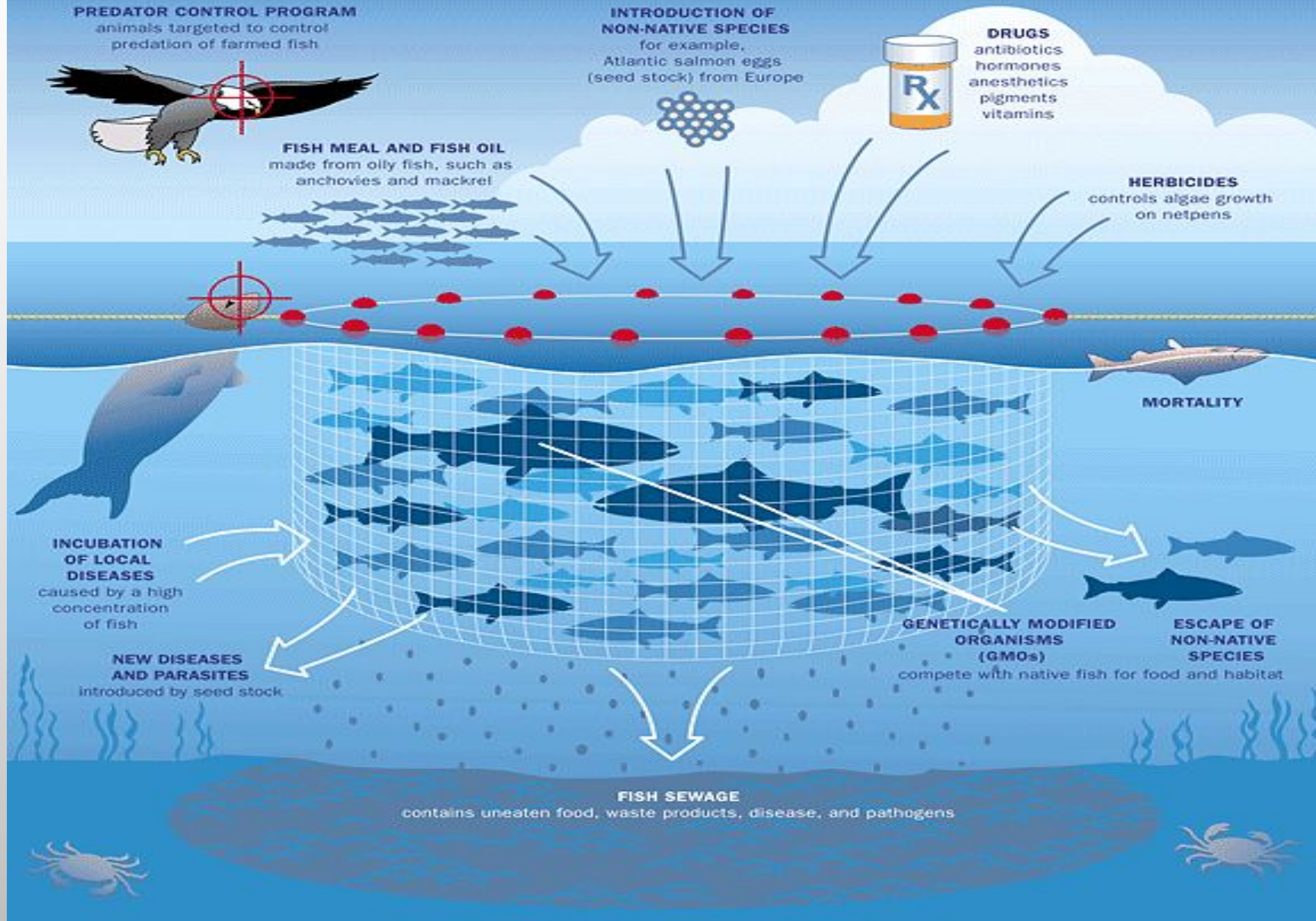
Corporate control of our food and oceans

Places profits above environmental protection, worker rights, animal welfare, and social responsibility.

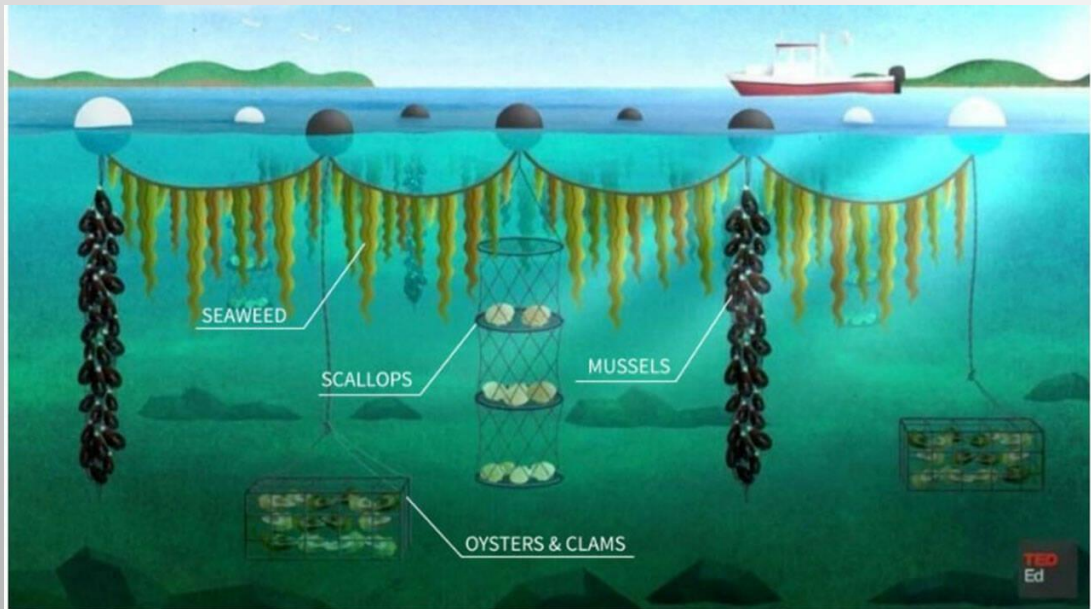
Competes with community-based seafood producers and providers

# WHAT IS WRONG WITH OFFSHORE FINFISH FARMING?

# Environmental Risks of Marine Aquaculture



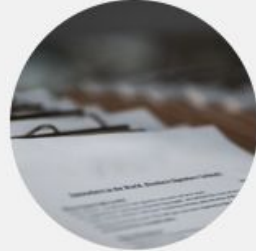
# RESPONSIBLE AQUACULTURE



# BETTER ALTERNATIVES



Prioritize species that are low-input and low-impact, like marine algae, filter feeders, and animals that eat naturally occurring feed.



Ensure policies are in place that protect the oceans from being carved into parcels and given to private investors that funnel money and opportunity away from coastal communities.



Scale appropriately so that aquaculture does not harm marine ecosystems, wild fish populations, or water quality, and does not displace other activities, such as fishing.



Provide the local community with nutritional and economic benefits.



Do not use genetically modified organisms in the fish farms or for fish feed.

Watch  
this  
space!



# ADVANCING THE QUALITY AND UNDERSTANDING OF AMERICAN AQUACULTURE (AQUAA) ACT

- VARIOUS VERSIONS OVER THE YEARS, SINCE THE EARLY 2000'S INTRODUCED AGAIN 2021 – **S. 3100** SENS WICKER (R-MS), SCHATZ (D-HI), RUBIO (R-FL), AND MORAN (R-KS), AND **HR. 6258** REPS PALAZZO (R-MS-4) AND CASE (D-HI-1)
- WOULD ALLOW PERMITTING IN U.S. FEDERAL WATERS UNDER NOAA/NMFS – NO MEANINGFUL SAFEGUARDS
- STALLED FOR NOW, BUT MIGHT BE ADDED TO A MOVING BILL
- WHAT WE CAN DO: CALL/WRITE YOUR OWN SENATORS AND REPS AND TELL THEM “NO DEVELOPMENT OF OFFSHORE FINFISH FARMING.”
  - SUPPORT HR 274 – KEEP FINFISH FREE (LATE REP. YOUNG (R-AK) PLUS 7 DEMOCRATIC CO-SPONSORS)



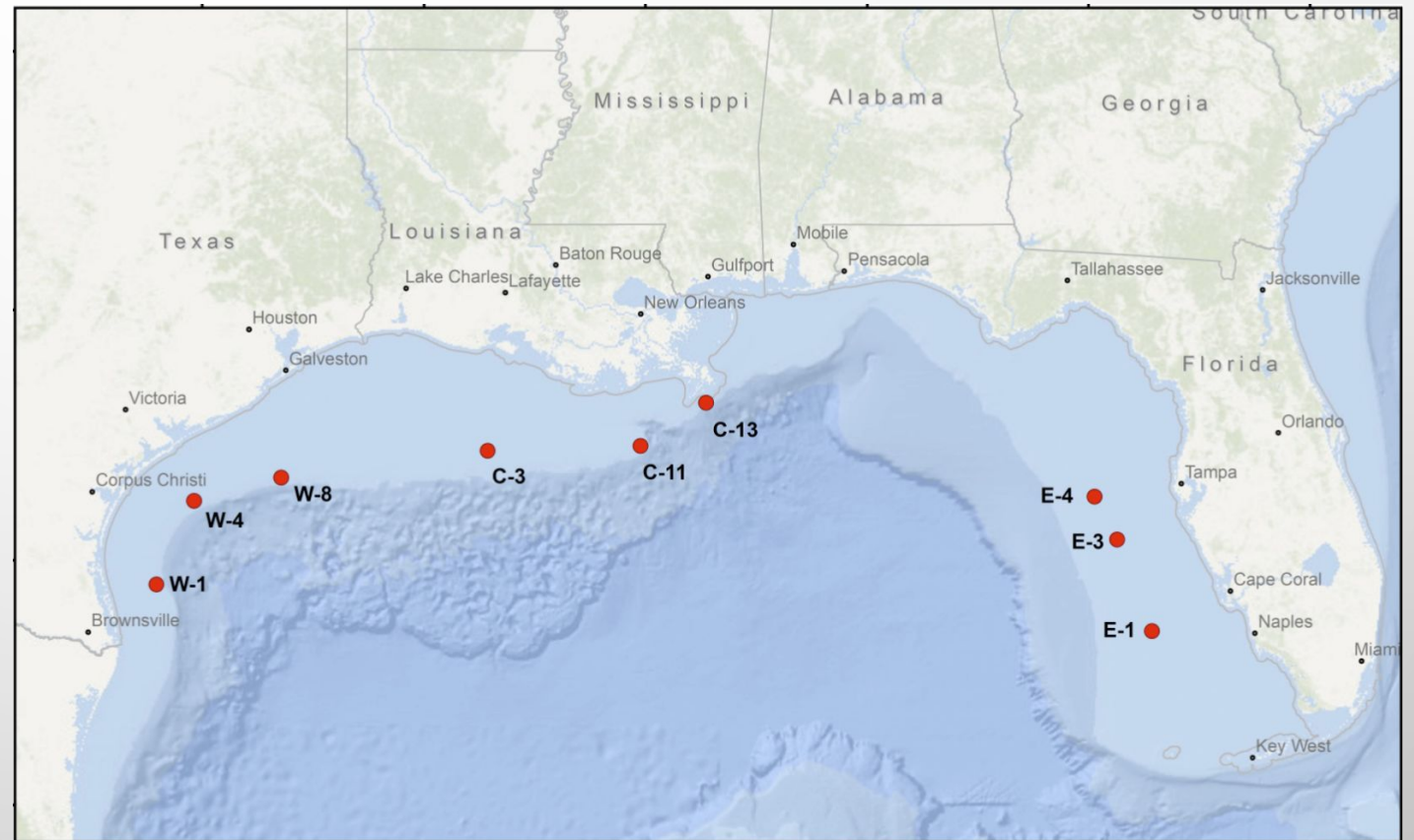
# EXEC ORDER 13921 – PROMOTING AMERICAN SEAFOOD COMPETITIVENESS AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

- TRUMP SIGNED EO MAY 7, 2020
  - WHY? **NOAA LOST LAWSUIT IN DISTRICT COURT** – 5<sup>TH</sup> CIRCUIT UPHELD RULING IN AUG 2020; NOAA NOT ALLOWED TO REGULATE AQUACULTURE IN US FEDERAL WATERS UNDER MSA
  - NAMES NOAA “LEAD AGENCY” – BUT NO CONGRESSIONAL AUTHORITY
  - REQUIRED USACE TO CREATE NATIONWIDE PERMITS – NWP 56
  - REQUIRED DEVELOPMENT OF AQUACULTURE OPPORTUNITY AREAS (AOAS)
- WHAT WE CAN DO: PUSH BIDEN TO REVOKE EO – SIGN THE PETITION
  - APRIL 2022 COALITION LETTER (180 GROUPS, 9 MILLION PEOPLE)
    - BIDEN ADMIN SEEMINGLY IN SUPPORT



# NOAA'S AQUACULTURE OPPORTUNITY AREA (AOA) ATLAS

- GULF OF MEXICO – 9 AREAS  
(INCLUDING TWO IN THE DEAD ZONE:  
C-11 AND C-13)
- SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BIGHT – 10  
AREAS (INCL. 2 THAT ARE NEAR  
KNOWN DDT DUMPSITES)
- MORE TO COME – BUT DIDN'T GET  
FUNDING YET
- CARVING UP MARINE SPACE INTO  
PRIVATE AREAS TO FAST TRACK  
PERMITTING OF OFFSHORE FINFISH  
AQUACULTURE



# SUBMIT COMMENTS BY AUG 1

- Tell NOAA that you support the **NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE**
- Link to Federal Register notice:  
<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/06/01/2022-11564/notice-of-intent-to-prepare-a-programmatic-environmental-impact-statement-for-identification-of>

## Notice of Intent To Prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Identification of Aquaculture Opportunity Areas in Federal Waters of the Gulf of Mexico and To Conduct Public Scoping Meetings

A Notice by the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#) on 06/01/2022

 This document has a comment period that ends in 14 days. (08/01/2022)

[SUBMIT A FORMAL COMMENT](#)

[Read the 60 public comments](#) 

**PUBLISHED DOCUMENT**

**AGENCY:**  
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce.

**ACTION:**  
Notice of intent to prepare a programmatic environmental impact statement and conduct public scoping meetings.

**SUMMARY:**  
In compliance with Section 7 of [Executive Order 13921](#), "Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and

**DOCUMENT DETAILS**

**Printed version:**  
[PDF](#)

**Publication Date:**  
06/01/2022

**Agencies:**  
[National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#)

**Dates:**  
The 60-day public scoping period begins Wednesday, June 1, 2022, and will continue until August 1, 2022. NMFS will consider all written comments received by August 1, 2022.

**Comments Close:**  
08/01/2022

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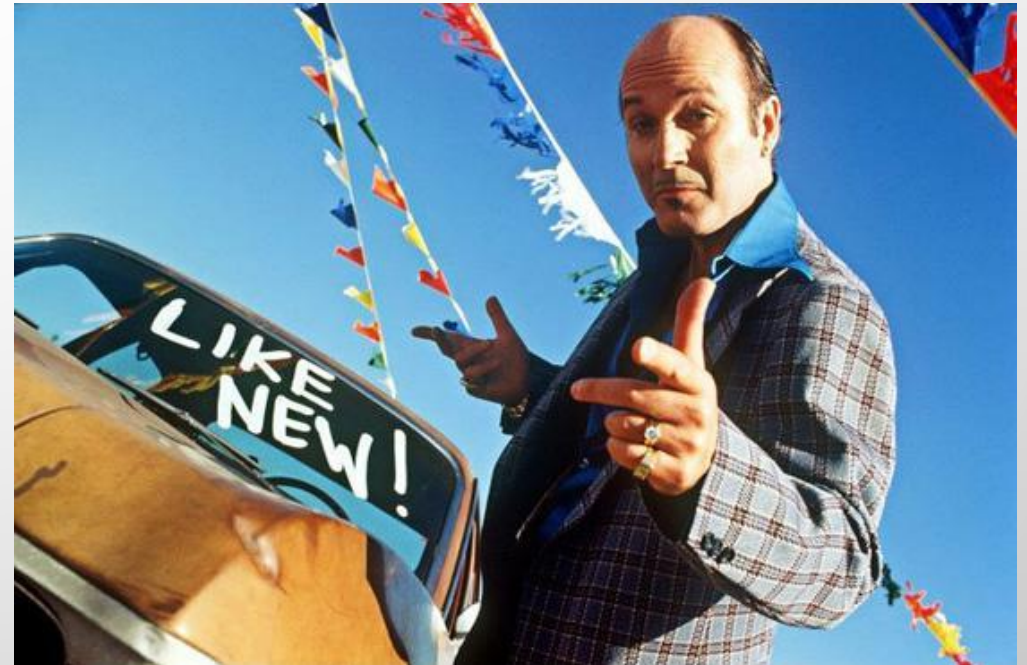


# WHO IS PUSHING THIS?



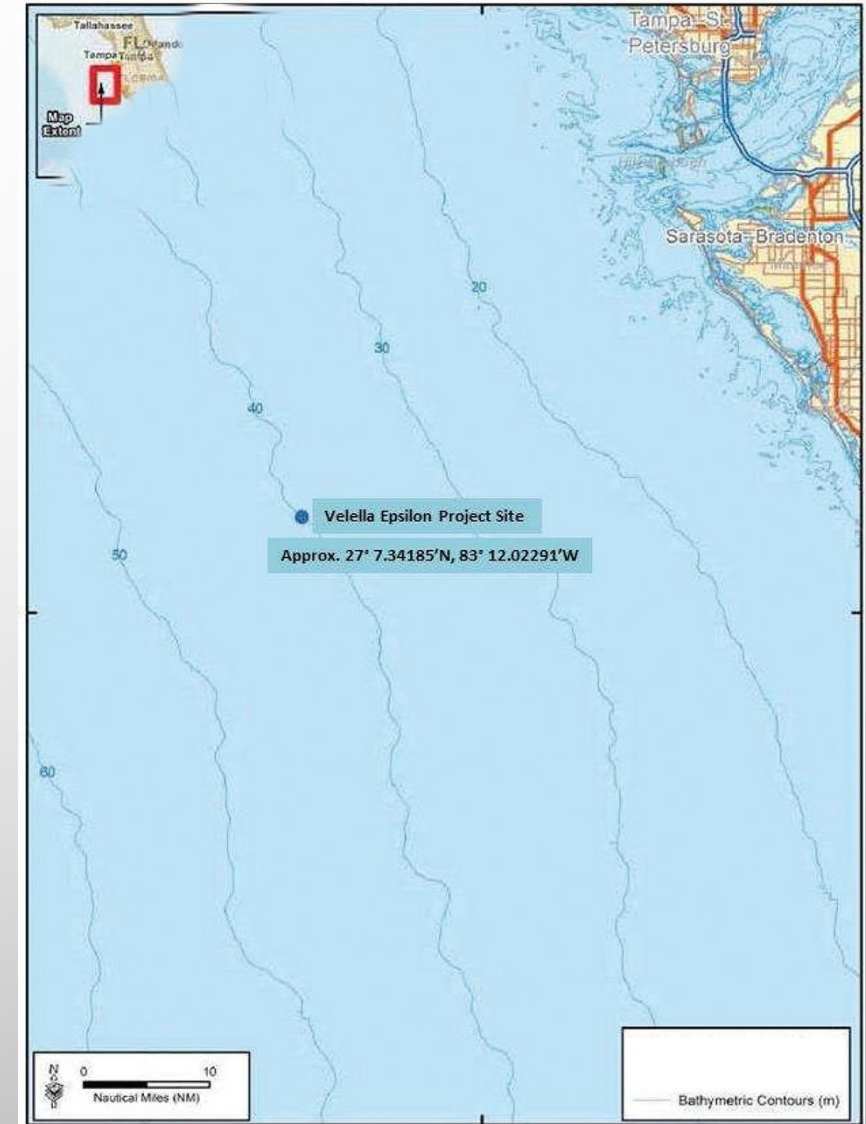
# SALES TACTICS

- FACTORY FARMING = “BLUE ECONOMY”
- HARP ON THE SEAFOOD TRADE DEFICIT WITHOUT PAINTING THE FULL PICTURE
- PRETEND IT COUNTERS OVERFISHING EVEN THOUGH IT CAUSES OVERFISHING
  - NET LOSS OF PROTEIN: MORE FISH GO IN THAN COME OUT
  - CAN'T FEED THE WORLD WITH LOSS OF FOOD AND UNAFFORDABLE END PRODUCT



# 1<sup>ST</sup> UP: VELELLA EPSILON

- IN GULF OF MEXICO OFF SARASOTA, FLORIDA – ALMACO JACK
  - HAWAII'S **OCEAN ERA** (FORMERLY KAMPACHI FARMS, FORMERLY KONA BLUE)
- EPA PERMIT ISSUED (NPDES PERMIT) IN SPITE OF PUBLIC OPPOSITION
- POTENTIAL LAWSUITS
  - EPA; USACE



# FISH FARMS IN THE GULF WILL WORSEEN RED TIDE

Red tides are becoming more frequent and devastating, particularly along Florida's Gulf coast. The picture at right is the Coral Shores neighborhood of Bradenton, FL.





# *Update on community concerns re: Velella Epsilon proposal*

NEAL SCHLEIFER, VICE PRESIDENT, SIESTA KEY CONDO COUNCIL



# EPA hearing on Vallela Epsilon permit

Huge opposition to offshore fish farm: residents, university scientists, environmentalists, fisherman and businesses

Photo Timothy Fanning, Sarasota Herald-Tribune 1/28/20



**Request NO ACTION on AOA's**



# EPA hearing in Sarasota at Mote Marine 1/28/20

100 expected, over 250 filled Wave Center, over 67 pre-registered speakers, almost all opposed, except for those employed or invested. Attendees from Tampa to Naples.

**The EPA received over 44,400 comments, almost all opposed.**

**EPA response based on inadequate data, not planned proliferation, 12 – 20**

**Area cities wrote Letters of Opposition: Sarasota, Holmes Beach and Sanibel City Commissioners**

Sarasota County Council of Neighborhood Associations, Inc. (CONA), Siesta Key Association  
Siesta Key Condominium Council, representing over 90 associations, over 7,000 households

**Virtual People's Hearing on Industrial Aquaculture in the Gulf of Mexico**

Army Corps of Engineers – USACE 9/30/2020

**NOAA opposition: Request NO ACTION on AOA's Sarasota E-3, Fort Myers E-1, Tampa E-4**

Most comments on webinars from our area so far

Sarasota County Commission Candidate Opposition

**Historical Problems:** Red Tide (millions of dollars lost), Tourism, Degradation of marine environment, Pride in area

Hurricanes, Cage escapes, boating, fishing, recreation, public ownership of federal waters

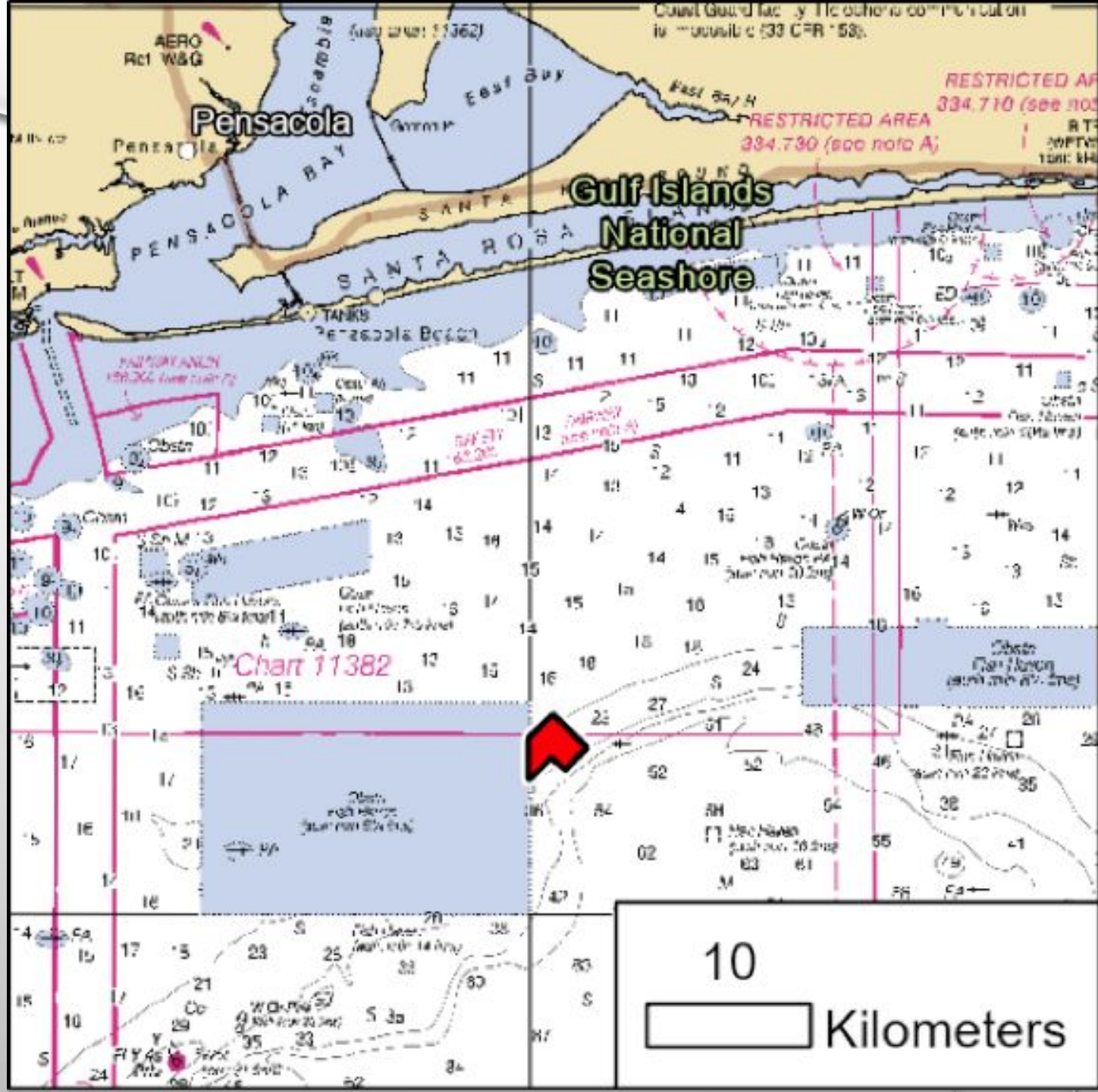
Preservation of marine environment and species, Blue holes: Amberjack Hole, Green Banana

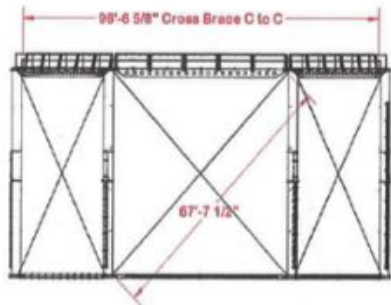
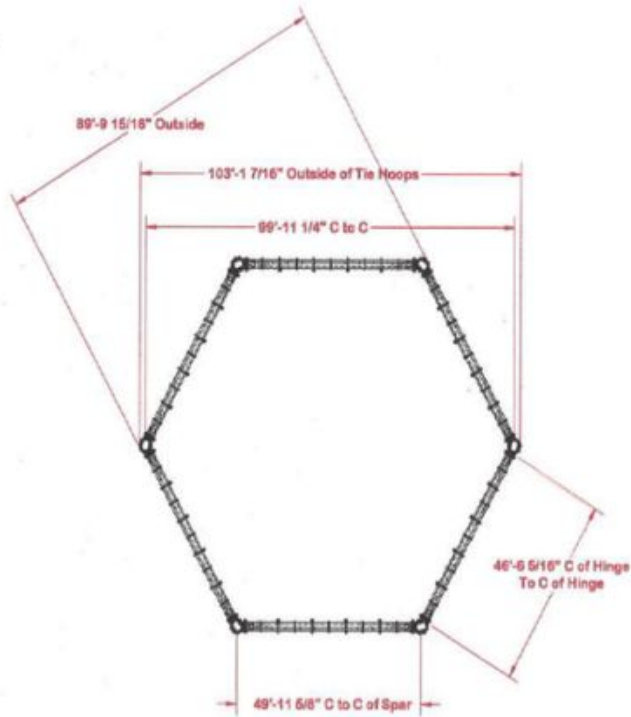
# MANNA FISH FARMS - PENSACOLA

Christian Wagley, Healthy Gulf

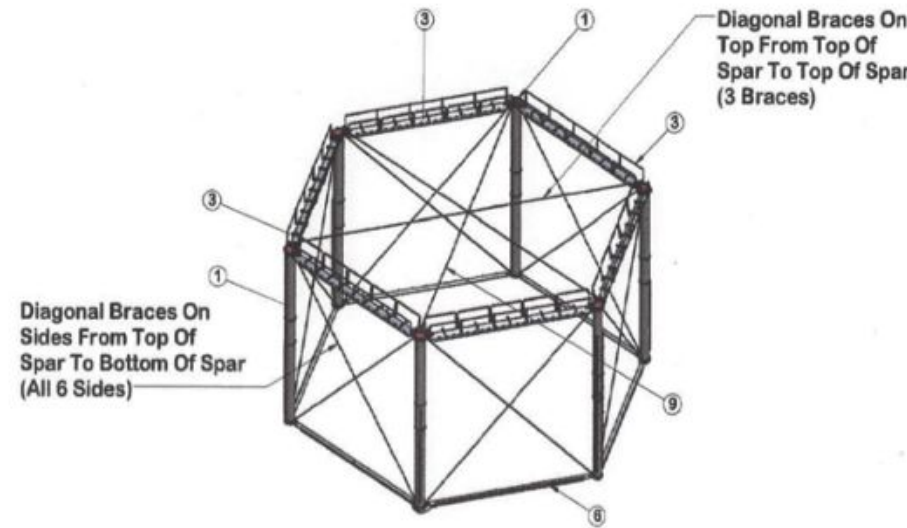








ITEM NO.	With Tarps & Railings/QTY.	PART NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	Width	Thickness	Height	Mat'l Desc	Length
1	5	Hex Spar Sectional R2	Hex Spar Sectional					
2	1	Control Spar	Hex Spar Sectional					
3	6	With Railings	Pipe Walkway					
4	2	Lower Spar Connection						
5	2	Lower Spar Connection						
6	1	Lower Spar Connection						
7	1	Lower Spar Connection						
8	12	811 5625 Rod						
9	3	1168.5						
10	1	Btm Hose	Btm Hose					



NOTES:  
 1. WELDING:  
 STEEL - CSA W47.1  
 ALUMINUM - CSA W47.2  
 UNLESS OTHERWISE SHOWN, WELD SIZE SHALL BE EQUIVALENT TO THICKNESS OF MEMBERS BEING JOINED.  
 2. ALL ALUMINUM STRUCTURAL MEMBERS ARE 6061-T5  
 ALL STEEL STRUCTURAL MEMBERS ARE A490  
 3. UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED SCM IS STEEL.  
 4. SPECIFIED LOADS.

NOTES  
 448210 Lbs  
 No Deck  
 No Piping  
 No X Brace  
 No Railings  
 No Pins

<b>A</b> TITLE <b>B</b> SCALE: <b>C</b>	PART NUMBER	DRAWINGS	JOB NUMBER
	MODEL	Hex Cage W Pipe Walkways	MEEKER'S MANAGEMENT SERVICES
CUSTOMER	SCALE	CHECKED BY:	SHEET NUMBER
	DATE	DATE:	OF
	June 1-16	REVISION DATE / #:	1   30
	DRAWN BY:		
	MJC		

DRAWINGS AND ENGINEERING BY:  
**KROPE CONSULTING**

- proposed 12 net pen system;
- 155' water;
- nearly 4 million lbs of annual production;
- full buildout by 2027

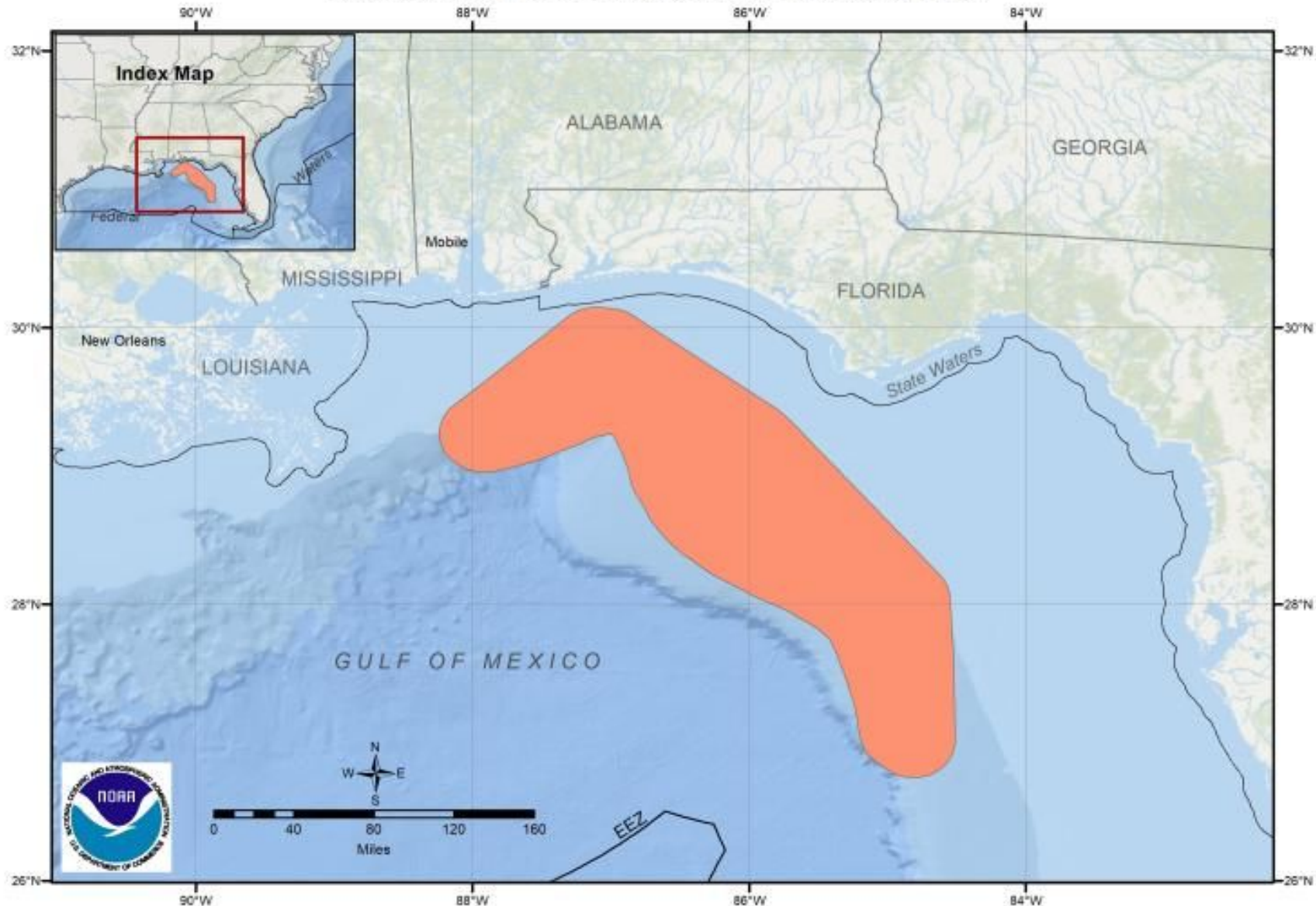


FWC photo by Katie Johnson





# Rice's Whale Core Distribution Area June 2019



Eri Ocean Basemap Sources: Eri, Garmin, GEBCO, NOAA NGDC, and other contributors

- USACE and EPA applications submitted in April 2022
- EPA deemed application complete in May 2022
- Anticipated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- NEPA determination will be made in near future
- Public scoping likely to take place in the fall
- Cooperating agencies: EPA and USACE





**DON'T CAGE**  
OUR OCEANS

# THANK YOU

- **THANK YOU** TO HEALTHY GULF FOR HOSTING THIS TALK TODAY AND FOR ALL ON THIS CALL!
- INTERESTED IN TAKING ACTION?
  - ACTION ALERT: <https://dontcageouroceans.org/no-fish-farms-in-the-gulf-of-mexico/>
  - TELL NOAA YOU SUPPORT THE “NO ACTION” ALTERNATIVE FOR THE GULF AOA PROPOSAL
- WANT TO JOIN AS AN ORGANIZATION OR BUSINESS?
  - Visit Members Resource site on the DCO2 Website or go to
  - [HTTPS://FORMS.GLE/CBFSJFV2GMXKZQVY6](https://forms.gle/CBFSJFV2GMXKZQVY6)
- QUESTIONS OR FOLLOW UP?
  - JAMES MITCHELL (LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR): [JMITCHELL@DONTCAGEOUROCEANS.ORG](mailto:JMITCHELL@DONTCAGEOUROCEANS.ORG)
  - ANDRIANNA NATSOULAS (CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR): [ANATSOULAS@DONTCAGEOUROCEANS.ORG](mailto:ANATSOULAS@DONTCAGEOUROCEANS.ORG)
  - CHRISTIAN WAGLEY (FLORIDA/ALABAMA COASTAL ORGANIZER): [CHRISTIAN@HEALTHYGULF.ORG](mailto:CHRISTIAN@HEALTHYGULF.ORG)
  - NEAL SCHLEIFER (VICE PRESIDENT, SIESTA KEY CONDO COUNCIL): [SKCONDOUNCIL@HOTMAIL.COM](mailto:SKCONDOUNCIL@HOTMAIL.COM)